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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0934  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000816

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS, SE WILLIAMSON  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [EAID](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: NORTH DARFUR ATTACKS APPEAR TO TARGET SLA/MM

REF: Khartoum 749

1. (SBU) A spate of attacks in North Darfur has resulted in the deaths of at least 13 Sudanese Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) rebels in the last week. According to UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), fighting erupted on May 20 in Kafoud between SLA/MM and SLA/Free Will (SLA/FW), after local authorities asked SLA/MM to vacate the town (NOTE: Kafoud village, approximately 60km north of El Fasher in North Darfur, has been the scene of much fighting during the month of May. Most of the fighting has involved SLA/MM, which controls the area, and SLA/FW, dominated by Tunjur tribe members. On May 2 a senior SLA/MM commander was shot and killed by suspected SLA/FW elements in Kafoud. END NOTE).

2. (SBU) UNDSS reports that combatants allied with Free Will approached Kafoud at night on May 20 and attacked positions held by SLA/MM, killing five. Much like the IDP camp in Tawila, emptied after conflict earlier in the month (reftel), residents fled Kafoud to nearby hills and villages. SLA/MM denied access to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), but its own medical team was able to treat 16 wounded persons and operate on six in Dar Salaam, including notable SLA/MM commander Juma Mendi, who was seriously injured in the attack. The humanitarian response in Kafoud will begin only when fighting ceases, and will include a security assessment to be conducted by UNDSS.

3. (SBU) According to UNOCHA, two SLA/MM members were shot and killed by Arab militiamen on the street in Kabkabiya May 21 in broad daylight. Additionally, on May 25, according to SLA/MM, six SLA/MM soldiers, traveling to Dar Salaam to visit their injured commander Mendi, were killed in a gunfight with Central Reserve Police near Gaour, southeast of El Fasher. Two injured rebels were taken to Dar Salaam for treatment by the ICRC.

4. (SBU) Adam Ali War, representative of SLA/MM in El Fasher, met with Fieldoffs on May 26 to discuss the situation and SLA/MM's response to the recent attacks. Ali War acknowledged SLA/MM's recent losses and explained that SLA/MM is now a victim of a concerted Government of Sudan (GoS) effort to incite rival rebel groups to inflict significant casualties on SLA/MM. Ali War hinted that Free Will has become a de facto GoS militia, driving brand new military vehicles and led by a GoS "captain" in military uniform (NOTE: SLA/FW interlocutors have denied this charge, but FieldOffs will follow up with them and report septel. END NOTE). Not optimistic about the chances for peace in Darfur this year, Ali War predicted the upcoming rainy season will bring further unrest, as armed groups in Darfur will continue to fight despite lack of access in certain pockets of Darfur.

5. (SBU) Local word-of-mouth indicates government targeting of SLA/MM may not be the sole cause for recent unrest. Darfuris indicate the SLA/MM's checkpoints are a normal feature of life in Darfur; rebels form checkpoints on key roads and bridges in North and South Darfur, demanding tolls from all passing travelers. There

are reports of SLA/MM going house to house in occupied towns and villages, demanding "protection money."

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The only Darfur rebel group that currently participates in the Government of National Unity, SLA/MM may sit in the path of an oncoming "perfect storm." While simultaneously losing support in Darfur and actively at odds with the GoS, SLA/MM appears vulnerable to circling rivals. With the GoS announcing recently it did not intend to abide by any terms of the ceasefire agreement, and the recent JEM attack on Omdurman emboldening rebels throughout the region, Darfur's precarious political balance among rebels groups may tip, sending the region into further conflict.

POWERS